

captives, of a tyrannic hierarchy, whose tyranny is based, not on the word of God but on the devices of men ? Read the Bible and be free. " This I say, that neither pope, nor bishop, nor any other man, has the right to prescribe a single syllable to any Christian without his consent."

This idea of Christian freedom he works out in his own theological fashion in " The Freedom of a Christian Man," which appeared shortly after. " The Christian man is free," he insists, and the root of his freedom lies in faith. It is faith that justifies, frees the soul from sin, makes it victorious over life and death. Over against the hierarchical priesthood he places the spiritual priesthood of believers, the equal status before God of those who live by faith. Once more he inveighs against the slavish notion of a privileged caste among Christians. ^{<E} If you ask, What is the difference between priest and layman ? I answer, Holy Scripture knows no other difference than that it calls those who teach, ministers, servants, stewards, who are instituted to preach faith and Christian freedom to other Christians. But there has arisen such a worldly, external, pompous, fearful priestly dominion in the Church, as if the laymen were something different from Christian people, and thereby we are deprived of freedom, faith, Christ Himself, and are become the victims of human ordinance and device, slaves of the most worthless men on earth."

Thus, whether he uses the language of popular invective, or of the theological controversialist, or the mystic divine, Luther preaches a gospel which involves a revolution, and bids fair, considering the circumstances of the age, to set the world ablaze. He attacks the pope, demolishes the hierarchy, appeals to the individual believer. And his words were not wasted on his generation. Four thousand copies of his address to the German nobility sold at once. Edition after edition carried the daring challenge to Rome over the land. The " De Captivitate," being in Latin, was less fitted to raise a sensation, but it found an anonymous and surreptitious translator in the following year in Thomas Müntzer, who hoped by this device to discredit the reformer with the people. The people did not fall into Müntzer's trap, and eagerly read the title-deed of its spiritual emancipation. The numerous